

# ***NEWS from the T&I DEMOCRATS***

***Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Democratic Caucus***

***U.S. House of Representatives, 2163 Rayburn HOB, Washington, DC 20515***

***www.house.gov/transportation\_democrats***

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## **OBERSTAR REACTS TO LONDON TERRORIST PLOT**

**WASHINGTON** – Congressman James L. Oberstar (D-MN), the Ranking Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, issued the following statement regarding the terrorist plot to blow up U.S.-bound airliners using liquid explosives that was thwarted by British Counterintelligence.

“British Counterintelligence did an excellent job in tracking down the cell, finding the individuals involved, and isolating the material. This incident shows the seriousness and the broadening nature of the continuing security threat to the United States.

Although much investigative work remains to be done on this terrorist operation, there are indications at this point that the cell has ties to Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda has not given up conspiring, plotting, and looking for soft spots in our nation’s homeland security, and clearly aviation continues to be a target of preference for terrorists. I have long been concerned about the potential for using liquid explosives to carry off a terrorist attack. The actions taken today to increase the security level at U.S. airports are an appropriate response to the nature of the threat.

This incident in London demonstrates the need to increase the number of screeners and improve our ability to detect explosives at all security checkpoints in U.S. airports. This Congress has arbitrarily capped the number of airport screeners at 45,000, and has provided neither the resources nor the technology for the screeners to get the job done. This cap does not provide TSA with flexibility that it needs to schedule screeners for training and other skill improvement activities, while continuing to staff security checkpoints at a sustained level of alert. The security screeners are already stretched thin, and clearly we need to increase their workforce and the use of explosive detection systems at security checkpoints.

Today's events also highlight the need for increased security for other modes of transportation, particularly port security. There are a number of actions remaining to be taken to secure our nation from further terrorist attacks."

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